

10.02: Rabies Vaccinations Required for Dogs, Cats and Ferrets

(1) Any person possessing a dog, cat or ferret shall have the animal

vaccinated against Rabies by a licensed veterinarian: (a) no later than the age of six months but not earlier than is indicated on the vaccine label; or, (b) within 30 days of acquisition or entry into Massachusetts, if the animal is over six months of age, unless proof is available that the animal is already Currently Vaccinated.

(2) A dog, cat or ferret shall be considered Currently Vaccinated effective 28 days after the date of initial vaccination, and for a period of one calendar year from the date of vaccination, in accordance with the vaccine label. Thereafter, all dogs, cats and ferrets shall continue to receive booster vaccinations at intervals according to the vaccine label.

(3) An animal that has received at least one Rabies vaccine in its lifetime but, has not received a booster vaccination prior to the expiration date of its last Rabies vaccination, will be considered Currently Vaccinated immediately following administration of a Rabies vaccine and the vaccine will be good for the duration indicated on the product label.

(4) An animal whose owner cannot provide proof of at least one previous Rabies vaccination will be considered Unvaccinated.

10.03: Vaccination Certificates

(1) A certificate of vaccination must be completed. Only certificates of vaccination issued by the licensed veterinarian who administered the vaccine shall be considered proof of an animal's vaccination status. The certificate is a legal document and must be signed by the veterinarian administering the vaccine. Electronic signatures and stamps may be used. The vaccinating veterinarian is responsible for the accuracy of all information on the certificate.

(2) The certificate shall be either the certificate recommended in the latest Compendium of Animal Rabies control published by the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, or a certificate containing at least the following information: the owner's name and address; a description of the animal, including predominant breed, sex, age, name and distinctive markings; date of vaccination; Rabies vaccination tag number; type of Rabies vaccine used; route of vaccination; expiration date of the vaccine; the vaccine lot number; and the name and signature of the veterinarian administering the vaccine.

(3) One copy of the certificate shall be filed by the vaccinating veterinarian within 30 days with the clerk of the city or town where the dog, cat or ferret resides, one copy is to be provided to the owner of the animal, and one shall be retained by the vaccinating veterinarian.

(4) No animal hospital, veterinarian's office, or boarding facility shall accept a dog, cat or ferret unless the owner or keeper of such animal can show proof of current vaccination against Rabies; if the animal has not been vaccinated or proof is not shown, the animal shall be vaccinated as long as the animal's medical condition permits.